

The Bilge Pump

Vol. 11, No. 07 - July, 2023

*The Irregular Publication of the Crew of the
Barque Lone Star - founded November, 1970*



PLEASE NOTE: **August 06, 2023 Meeting** NOTICE

We will be conducting our next monthly meeting virtually on **August 06** at 1:00 pm central. I will send out the link for the meeting the week before the meeting. The story for the month is "**The Adventure of the Second Stain**".

Bob Katz, BSI, ASH, will lead the discussion on the story of "**The Adventure of the Second Stain**".

Rich Krisciunas, ASH, will look at the legal aspects of the story.

Joe Fay will provide a summary of one of the "writings on the writings".

Mike Ranieri, MBt, President of the Toronto Bootmakers, will be our featured guest speaker.

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For more information concerning our society, visit: <http://www.dfw-sherlock.org/>

You can follow us on Twitter at: @barquelonestar

You can friend us on Facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/BarqueLoneStar>

Who dunnit:



Third Mate
Helmsman
Spiritual Advisors

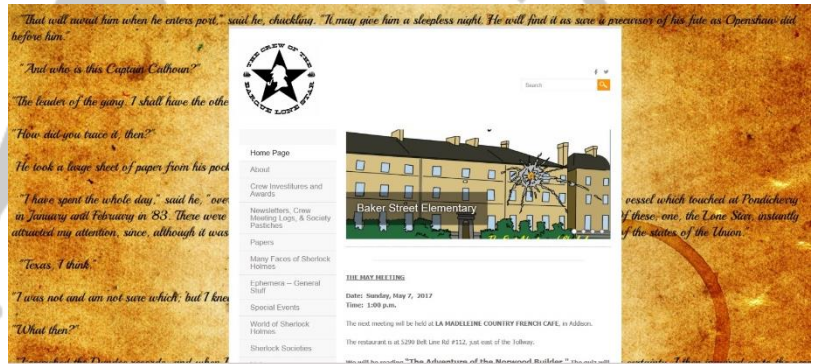
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Our Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/BarqueLoneStar/>

JULY 02 SUMMARY

Cindy Brown, BSI, ASH

There were 64 in attendance at this ZOOM meeting.

The Meeting was started with a toast given by Third Mate, Steve Mason, and was dedicated to the Joel Senter Essay contest. This contest helps young Sherlockians learn and express their thoughts threw essays, and gives monetary prizes to the winners (see page 5).

We then proceeded to the quiz on this month's story, "The Adventure of The Abbey Grange".

Next our own **Bob Katz, BSI, ASH**, led a discussion of the story for the month.

Thanks to all who participated in developing a map of where are members are from... you can see the current map at our website...

<https://www.dfw-sherlock.org/about-the-crew-of-the-barque-lone-star.html>. And it appears that we nearly covered the globe.

The 8th book by the Crew of the Barque Lone Star will be published this year, and the topic will be unsolved mysteries which took place in

the late 1800's, in the area where the author lives and how Sherlock Holmes might have solved the crime.

Sandy Kozinn, ASH then did a limerick of "The Abbey Grange" (see page 5).

Rich Krisciunas, ASH gave us a description of the potential legal issues which might be involved in the story of the Abbey Grange. Was the killing done in self-defense, or the defense of others? A thorough discussion of divorce in the late 1800's ensued.

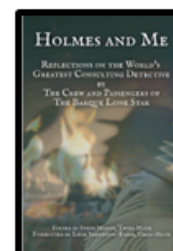
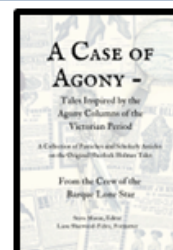
Joe Fay then gave the group a short presentation on Books on the Canon and referred to "The Canonical Compendium".

The featured presenter this month was our own **Liese Sherwood-Fabre**, and her presentation was on Opium Dens in Victorian England.

Rich Krisciunas, ASH, then did the closing toast, to the Crew of the Barque Lone Star.

As always, thanks so much to Cindy Brown, BSI, for keeping the notes of the meeting.

The Crew of the Barque Lone Star Society is producing our 7th book as part of our 53rd Anniversary.



For this year, we are asking for members to submit a pastiche or newspaper article in which Sherlock Holmes is called upon to solve a mystery in your home local area. This may involve an actual crime, a ghost story, or any other mystery that is based on some historical event in your area. (and we are being very liberal on the definition of area – city, town, county, or region – your choice).

1. Again, you can write up the case as a pastiche (either 1st, 2nd or 3rd person) or you can write it as a newspaper article written by a reporter covering the event.
2. Your paper should not exceed 2,500-3,000 words, so that our book does not have more pages than a dictionary... but we can be a little flexible on that... obviously, shorter stories are fine.
3. Your story will be edited by one or two member volunteer editors, but only for grammar, typos... we will not edit the content of your story. Just please remember our books are for all ages.
4. This project is not limited to just those members in the DFW area. Any member (if you're getting this email) is welcome to submit a paper.
5. We plan to finalize the anthology by the end of the calendar year, so we ask for members to submit their entry by October 1.

The final product will be put together in book form and posted on our website and shared with all society members as a .pdf file. We plan on publishing copies of the book as a gift for those who submit a piece. And the book will be placed on Barnes & Noble, as we have done for the previous 6 books, for sale at cost.

Our Society has a wonderful website, chocked full of Sherlockian items. Visit us at... www.dfw-sherlock.org

If you would like to participate, you can email us at: mason.steve8080@gmail.com



BEACONS OF THE FUTURE

Steve Mason, BSI, ASH

In the Naval Treaty, Holmes suggests to Watson, as they travel by train, 'Lighthouses, my boy! Beacons of the future! Capsules, with hundreds of bright little seeds in each, out of which will spring the wiser, better England of the future.'

Thus, the Beacon Society sees our future generations, and believe educating younger people about Sherlock Holmes will assist them as they grow up.

Last year, we did a survey of over 300 Sherlockians, and it was determined the average age at which a Sherlockian is first exposed to the Master is approximately 11 years old, and amazingly, 1/3 of the respondents indicated they were hooked upon that first exposure.

Each year, the Beacon Society sponsors the Joel Senter Essay Contest, and we applaud

the 9 students who were awarded for their efforts this year...

Casey Moy

Thomas Duh

Ryan Foley

Sabrina Kim

Our own Thomas Hébert
and Nicole Eutsler

Eliana Kwon

Avery Piatt

Conan Lamb

As the Speckled Band of Boston Prayer states, "children yet unborn (how we envy them!) will eagerly join the never-ending throng ...who have followed, emulated and loved the two old comrades we honor here" and their creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

So here is to our essay winners, and all of those who found Sherlock Holmes at a younger age and became a Sherlockian for life.

*Brackenstall, in a mad drunken fury,
Attacked his wife who was good and quite pure. He
Ended up dead.
Later Mary re-wed,
Thanks to Watson, that good English jury.*

Sandy Kozinn, ASH

A MOST DANGEROUS POLICY

Liese Sherwood-Fabre, PhD, Deck-Mate

In *The Sign of the Four*, Holmes notes to Watson that one should not be fooled by outward qualities. As an example, he states, "The most winning woman I ever knew was hanged for poisoning three little children for their insurance money." Insurance policies were quite popular in Victorian times, and, sadly, more than one insured person met their end under suspicious circumstances. The sudden inheritance of a sum sometimes equivalent to a working man's annual salary was a temptation some couldn't resist. Two sisters went so far as to recruit other women in a sort of club to collect insurance benefits.

The practice of insurance dates back to 4000-3000 BCE Babylon with "bottomry" contracts. In such arrangements, merchants would secure loans for shipments of goods with a provision that the loan would not be repaid if the ship was lost at sea. (1)

The modern marine insurance industry began in the late 1600s in London at a coffeehouse run by Edward Lloyd. Coffeehouses were primarily places of

business where merchants and investors could meet. Lloyd's establishment on Tower Street became known for shipping. Ship owners, captains, and crew would meet to exchange news. Businessmen would learn about upcoming shipments and offer to invest/insure the goods (bottomry). (2) These ships would be listed on a blackboard in the coffeehouse.



Information on the cargo, crew, destination, and weather would be listed. Those interested in investing/insuring in a particular ship wrote their name underneath, creating the concept of underwriting. (3) Over

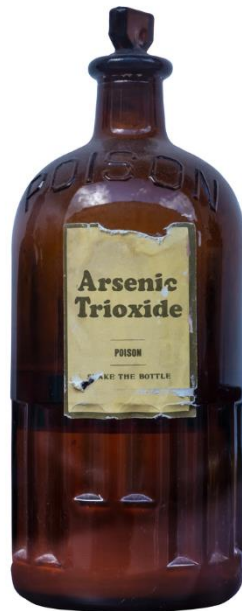
the years, the organization passed into different hands and locations, evolving into Lloyd's of London, but continued to specialize in maritime insurance until the late 1800s when it entered the life insurance business—long after it had been established. (4)

Ancient Romans were the first to create life insurance policies in the form of burial clubs. Burial was necessary because if the person wasn't interred correctly, they were doomed to an afterlife as an unhappy ghost. These burials, however, cost money, and Caius Marius organized his troops into clubs

who pledged to pool resources to cover the cost of these rituals. Over time, the clubs included a sum of money provided to any of the deceased's survivors. (5)

This practice appeared again in the 1500s in London when Richard Martin bought a policy underwritten by 16 others for a man named William Gibbons. Martin collected £4800 for the premium of £384. This type of practice continued for the next 200 years until outlawed in 1774. (6)

By 1700, life insurance shifted from speculation on a particular person's death to that of tontines. In this arrangement, individuals would pay each year into a common account, and those surviving until the end of the year would receive a payout based on the number surviving. Over time, these groups would even invest funds to increase the pool. (7) The Amicable Society for a Perpetual Assurance Office used this concept of a tontine to establish the first recognized life insurance company. (8) Founded by William Talbot, the Bishop of Oxford, and Sir Thomas Allen, 2nd Baronet, in 1706, the society began with 2000 members who paid a fixed amount per year for one to three shares. At the end of the year, the widows and children of any of the members who passed during the year received the deceased member's portion. (9)



While such societies focused primarily on professionals who had little to bequeath their survivors—unlike those in agriculture or commerce who had property that could be passed on—another type of tontine emerged in the form of burial clubs or friendly societies aimed at the working poor. The members of these groups paid a set amount into a pool that would then be used to pay for a proper funeral if the insured passed. For the Victorian poor, the lack of funds for an appropriate burial would mean the final humiliation of a pauper's burial or worse, being delivered for dissection by medical students. (10)

Unfortunately, life insurance companies and practices faced little to no regulation on who could be insured. Fraud abounded in the industry with some being covered under numerous policies, and some of those insured (particularly children) murdered for the benefits. While actual figures cannot be calculated, Renee Noffsinger examined reported homicide cases to estimate the vulnerability of children under 5 was at least 40 times greater than that for older children. (11)

Perhaps the most notorious case of the tie between homicide and insurance involved "The Black Widows of Liverpool." The death of Thomas Higgins in 1883 led to the investigation of his wife Margaret and her

sister Catharine Flanagan. Higgins' brother had pushed for the investigation that confirmed he had died of arsenic poisoning. Three additional deaths were attributed to the two. Angela Brabin's recent research into the case found the two were members of a "poison club" of nine women who could be traced to at least six more and seven probable murders. In all cases, the deceased was

insured by those in the group (often many times over) and died of arsenic poisoning (which the group processed itself). (12)

As gruesome as Holmes' description of "the most winning woman" appeared, hers represented only the tip of the iceberg of the terrible connection between homicide and insurance in Victorian England.

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- 1) <https://www.britannica.com/topic/insurance/Japan>
 - 2) <https://www.lloyds.com/about-lloyds/history/coffee-and-commerce>
 - 3) <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/history-insurance-underwriting-explained-2-minutes-sachs-cfp-clu->
 - 4) https://www.swissre.com/dam/jcr:e8613a56-8c89-4500-9b1a-34031b904817/150Y_Markt_Broschuere_UK_EN.pdf
 - 5) <https://www.cigna.com/static/docs/life/the-history-of-life-insurance.pdf>
 - 6) <https://tontinecoffeehouse.com/2019/11/04/the-amicable-society/#:~:text=To%20these%20ends%2C%20the%20Amicable,serve%20as%20the%20company%27s%20headquarters.>
 - 7) <https://www.wallstreetmojo.com/tontine/>
 - 8) <https://www.cigna.com/static/docs/life/the-history-of-life-insurance.pdf>
 - 9) <https://worldkings.org/news/recognized-records/worldkings-the-constant-world-records-seeking-journey-p-273-amicable-society-for-a-perpetual-assurance-office-united-kingdom-world-s-first-life-insurance-company>
 - 10) <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0890838920300317>
 - 11) <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/iusburj/article/download/19722/25805/43749>
 - 12) Angela Brabin, *The Black Widows of Liverpool: A Chilling Account of Cold-Blooded Murder in Victorian Liverpool*. Palatine Books, 2003.

READING DON'S MAIL: SOME ARCHIVAL INSIGHTS ON COLLECTORS AND COLLECTING

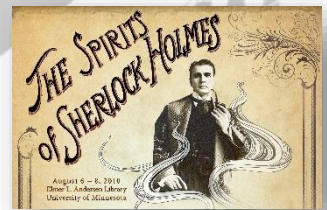
Tim Johnson, BSI

Presented at "Lone Star Holmes Conference", Dallas, TX, May 2023



Before talking about reading someone's mail, I would like to thank The Crew of the Barque Lone Star for the invitation to join these festivities, and the staff of the libraries at Southern Methodist University for co-hosting this exhibition, conference, and celebration of Don Hobbs and his Sherlock Holmes Collection. This is my first time on your campus, and I've been looking forward to this visit.

It's nice to see Don's collection at SMU. I went back into my email to see when we might have first met, but the date escapes me. My guess is that it may have been as early as 1999 or 2000, most likely in New York. I do know that Don was an attendee at our 2007 triennial conference, "Victorian Secrets and Edwardian Enigmas," and again in 2010 with "The Spirits of Sherlock Holmes" and that at this conference he presented the Sherlock Holmes Collections with two more translations—Scots Gaelic and Farsi if my memory serves. I also know that Don and I talked—more than once—about the future of his collection. It might have been during one of the Baker Street Irregulars birthday weekends in New York City, or at a conference. Minnesota, obviously, was interested in the Hobbs Collection.



In any event, please know that I'm happy it is here. As a wise colleague once said to me, "It doesn't matter whether things end up at one institution or another." What is important is that we know—as librarians, archivists, and curators—and what we especially know as *Holmesian or Doylean keepers*—that acquiring collections is not a competition. It is a collaboration. We, like the original Irregulars, look out for each other and celebrate each other's accomplishments. When a collection like Don's lands at a place like SMU



or Minnesota it will be well-cared for, cataloged, described, exhibited, taught, and programmed around for the enjoyment and learning and betterment of all who encounter it. So, I say again: Well done, Don! Well done, Southern

Methodist University! Congratulations! The Sherlockian world salutes you! Welcome to the club!

Now, this little paper is titled “Reading Don’s Mail,” but it might be shortened to “Reading Don.” You see, I had my worries when starting out on this little adventure whether any mail in fact existed. What initially raised warning flags came as I listened to Don’s 2014 interview with Scott Monty and Burt Wolder in Episode 64 of “I Hear of Sherlock Everywhere.”¹ In that interview Don pointed out that “there’s still just 100 languages the [Sherlockian] Canon has been translated into” and that he had “96 of those languages.” My moment of concern came when Scott asked: “Are you fluent in many of these languages?” to which Don replied, “I can barely speak English.”²



My concerns were heightened when I started to look for letters Don might have written to famed Sherlockian and monumental collector, John Bennett Shaw. I knew, from the IHOSE podcast, that Don met Shaw, visited Shaw’s home, communicated with Shaw, and modeled his library after Shaw.

The question was: When did Don write his first letter to Shaw?

I have an inventory—soon to be turned into an archival guide—of Shaw’s correspondence; at least for the first seven record cartons. I worked my way through the inventory but saw no signs of Don. Left with three remaining and not inventoried cartons, I made my way through folder after folder looking for a literate Mr. Hobbs.



Record carton number 8 was a bust; no letters from Don. I was beginning to think—OK, the guy said he could barely speak English. It was starting to look like he was not much better at writing English.

In each box, looking for a Hobbs folder, I hit a certain rhythm, based on the named folders I saw before and after where his folder should be—that elusive letter string of H.O.B.B.S. These names appeared again and again, folder after

¹ <https://www.ihearofsherlock.com/2014/05/episode-64-sherlock-holmes-in.html>

² This moment begins at the 13:20 mark of the podcast.

folder. It brought to mind a famous sporting poem, "Baseball's Sad Lexicon." I'm sure many of you have heard these lyrics:

These are the saddest of possible words:

"Tinker to Evers to Chance."

Trio of bear cubs, and fleeter than birds,

Tinker and Evers and Chance.

Ruthlessly pricking our gonfalon bubble,

Making a Giant hit into a double –

Words that are heavy with nothing but trouble:

"Tinker to Evers to Chance."³

In my case, the Sherlockian-Hobbsian version of this poem might read:

These are the saddest of possible words:

Hammer to Izban to Rice

Trio of fair clubs, and sweeter than nerds,

Hammer to Izban to Rice.

Ruthlessly tricking our not fallen stubble,

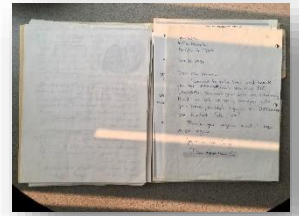
Making us search every file, every shuffle.

Letters escape us; our search we redouble.

Hammer to Izban to Rice.

³ Baseball poem by Franklin Pierce Adams, originally published "That Double Play Again" in the *New York Evening Mail*, July 12, 1910.
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On to record carton 9. In one of the last folders in the box I finally hit paydirt. I was so overcome with the moment that I had to record it for posterity. Notice the morning light, tinted red by Canadian wildfires, streaming through the office windows across the page. It was not the first letter chronologically, but it was the first letter I came across in the file from Don. So, the balance of this little talk will focus on these letters—yes, I found more—from Don to John Bennett Shaw. Thank God the man could write! And in English!



There is a certain delicacy and concern for privacy reading letters from a man still very much with us. I've exercised some discretion and hope he won't mind the tidbits shared here. The letters do present some questions, many of which I hope he might answer.

Don's first letter is dated October 10, 1991. He wrote:

Dear Mr. Shaw,

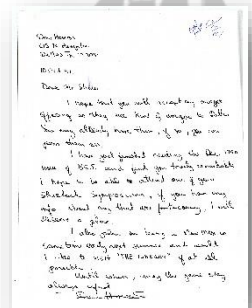
I hope that you will accept my meager offering as they are kind of unique to Dallas. You may already have them, if so, you can pass them on.

I have just finished reading the December 1990 issue of BSIJ [*Baker Street Journal*] and find you truly remarkable. I hope to be able to attend one of your Sherlock Symposiums, if you have any info about any that are forthcoming, I will reserve a place.

I also plan on being in New Mexico sometime early next summer and would I like to visit "THE LIBRARY" if at all possible.

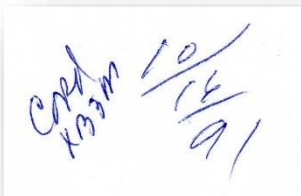
Until then, may the game stay always afoot.

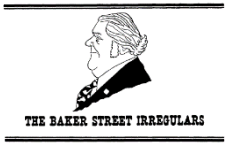
— Don Hobbs



Now, I won't spend a lot of time picking apart each letter, but it is interesting

to note that Shaw, in the upper right corner of the letter, notes a date—October 16, 1991—and a code—possibly "Card | XB3M." Is the date that of receipt or reply? And what does the code mean?





And then there's the substance of the letter. What "offerings" did Don make?

Perhaps he remembers and can answer during the Q&A period? And why is the December 1990 *BSJ* significant? This question is easy to answer: the December issue was a special number in honor of Shaw.

Don's second letter went out a month later, on November 11, 1991. I think he was a little more than excited; his English was slipping; there's a hint of Canadian or Upper Midwest dialect. Don wrote:

Dear Mr. Shaw—

I wanted to take time and thank you for letting me visit you and THE LIBRARY. You and your wife are extremely kind to let so many stranger [sic] into you [sic] home, except I guess all SHERLOCKIANS are kindred folk, eh?



Thank you again and I hope to so again—Yours in the Canon



Don Hobbs



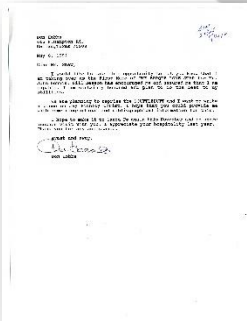
On the back of this letter is a photocopy of a Polish language copy of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and a note, "early 1920?" A gift from Don?

For a bit of context, here's a picture of John Bennett Shaw and his library—THE LIBRARY—from July 1990, a little over a year before Don's first letter and later visit.



Don Hobbs reports a new (1991) addition to the Canonical series published by the Reader's Digest Association: THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, with new illustrations by David Johnson.

Here I need to turn away from the letters for a moment to note Don's first appearance in Peter Blau's *Scuttlebutt from the Spermaceti Press*. We are, after all, on the trail of a very entertaining and enthusiastic Sherlockian. In #3 February 1992 Peter noted: "Don Hobbs reports a new (1991) addition to the Canonical series published by the Reader's Digest Association: THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, with new illustrations by David Johnson." Don would appear again on the pages of *Scuttlebutt* in March 1994 when he reported "that Greek translations of five of the nine volumes of the Canon" were "available from G. C. Eleftheroudakis SA, International Bookstore, 4 Nikis Str., Athens 105 63, Greece."



Don's third letter to Shaw was written (or rather, typed) on May 6, 1992. He

wrote:

Dear Mr. Shaw,

I would like to take this opportunity to let you know that I am taking over as the First Mate of THE BARQUE LONE STAR for Mr. John Dennis. Bill Beeson has encouraged me and assured me that I am capable. I am certainly honored and plan to do the best to my abilities.

We are planning to reprise the SCUTTLEBUTT and I want to write a piece on Jay Finnley Christ [sic]. I hope that you could provide me with some biographical and bibliographical information for this.

I hope to make it to Santa Fe again this November and to share another visit with you. I appreciate your hospitality last year. Thank you for any assistance.

Avast and away,

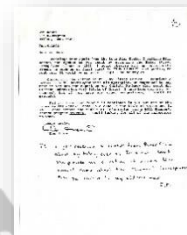
[signed]

Don Hobbs

The Shaw note in the upper right corner indicates that he sent two obituaries to Don on May 12.

Don's next letter, the fourth, was written on June 4, 1992. As with earlier missives, he was still on a somewhat formal basis with his correspondent, using the salutation "Dear Mr. Shaw." He continued:

Greetings once again from the Lone Star State. I believe Bill Beeson has spoken to you about my attending the Baker Street Irregulars dinner in 1993. I would cherish such an opportunity almost as much as my first visit to "THE LIBRARY" and getting to meet you. It would be an honor I hope I am worthy of.



Concerning the matter of Mr. Jay Finley Christ, I received a letter from Mr. Harrington with his apologies. [I'm guessing that this might be the author Hugh T. Harrington, but I'm not sure. BSI 1996 "Wisteria Lodge"--author] Don continued, "He [Mr. Harrington] regretted to say that it [sic] was not the expert on Mr. Christ. He knew a lot about Mr. Clifton Andrews but very little of Christ. I have been doing my own research but if you have any other suggestions, I would be grateful.

Don ended his letter with something almost out of left field—or to put it in a Lone Barqian context, a wave across the deck.

Did you know, [Don wrote,] that "door" is mentioned in all but one of the tales in the Canon? There is a clue in the title of which one it is. I came across the tidbit of information using Bill Beeson's search program Mycroft. I would [sic] looking for all of the references to wood.

Your truly,

[signed]

Don Hobbs

[handwritten] P.S. I just received a letter from Peter Blau about my taking over as Third Mate. Could you provide me a listing of others who should know about this change? Correspondence may be direct [sic] to my address now. DH

Near the end of the year, on December 17, Don, now at a different address, wrote another letter, his fifth to Shaw, this time opening "Dear John,"

Thank you for the wonderful Christmas card, your kindness is always an inspiration. I wanted to take this opportunity to also thank you for giving my name to Dr. Lumbroso.

He was in Dallas last month and we had a very nice visit. He was very gracious and extremely interesting to talk to. I had a few duplicate volumes that I gave to him, which included a couple of the Mycroft-Moran editions of August Derleth's Solar Pons. At the time I didn't know that Dr. Lumbroso's special interest was with Solar Pons. He seemed genuinely pleased and mentioned that eh [sic] had an article published in The Solar Pons Dossier. He also gave me 3 Italian comic books which featured "FIVE" "THIS" "BOSH" "RED" "SCAN" AND "IDEA". These are nice additions to my foreign language section. He invited me to visit him in Rome as well.

After sharing some personal news Don signed off with a heartfelt "Thank you once again for all that you do."

Canonically yours,

[signed]

Don Hobbs

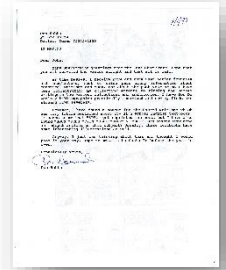
[handwritten] P.S. Please find enclosed a couple of items I came across.

Merry Christmas to you & Dorothy.

Don

There are seven more letters in the Hobbs-Shaw series, all of them written in 1993, the last one dated August 14—an even dozen letters all together. I don't know if we need to go through the remaining ones in detail, but I would like to point out a few interesting bits before I conclude, and we open it up for questions.

In March '93 Don shared that "For about the past year or so I have been concentrating my collecting efforts to finding the Sacred Writings in the various collections and anthologies. I have Ron De Waal's 2 bibliographies practically memorized and now my finds are slowing down severely." At the same time, however, he "found a source for the Sacred writings which has very little mentioned about it—High school English textbooks" and wondered if anyone had written about these books, many of which "have some interesting illustrations as well."



Speaking of illustrations (or doodles), Don added a handwritten note with a copy of the *Fox Trot* comics from the March 14 *Dallas Morning News*.



Almost twenty years later many of Don's doodles would find their way into his book, *Sherlocking: an adventure in aesthetic Sherlockian realism*. (Platypress, 2012)

"Edition limited to 100 copies, hand numbered and autographed by the creator."⁴

A favorite doodle with some relation to this talk. "Our blinds were half-drawn, and Holmes lay curled upon the sofa, reading and re-reading a letter which he had received by the morning post. (CARD)



In April Don sent John a copy of the program from the play "Sherlock Holmes: The Last Adventure," written by Joe and Brad Dickinson. He also hoped to get a copy of the script "as we did for their last Sherlockian play." "I attended opening night," Don wrote, "and plan on going again. Being a melodrama, the crowd noise made it difficult to hear everything the first time." He also wished John

⁴ Inspired at an exhibit, "Aesthetic Realism", by Chiam Kopplemen, Hobbs began a series of sketches in Aesthetic Sherlockian Realism. With deerstalker and a pipe, Holmes is depicted in scenes and episodes inspired by passages from the Canon.

well during a current illness and looked forward to seeing him in Santa Fe during an August conference.

Later in April Don sent along his “very first attempt at writing a Sherlockian paper” and indicated that he “would like to have it published.” The work was titled “Blind Beetle or Bland Beetle” and covered three double-spaced pages. He wasn’t sure where it might be published and asked Shaw for “any critical input that you see fit to offer.” Don added, “Hopefully this will not be [sic] my last effort at writing. I have several ideas pending and now that I have more time maybe I can get some work done.” Did it ever get published?

A third letter followed at the end of the month. Don was seeking advice on forming a scion society, “The Maniac Collectors,” “for those people who have the collecting mania in its most acute form.” He also wanted “to publish a newsletter that deals with collecting Sherlockian items; what is available for sale or trade; book reviews and maybe some bibliographic information about different editions or printings.” Don also reported to Shaw that he’d received a package from Dr.

Lumbroso and that the comic book pastiches showed “someone who looks remarkably like you.”

In July, Don was busy tracking down bibliographic information on a 1902 Danish edition and sought the help of Shaw, Ron De Waal, and Peter Blau. Shaw’s note on the letter linked the title to a De Waal bibliographic entry.

A month later Don was back home from the conference in Santa Fe and thanking John “for allowing my family and I [to] visit you and “The Library.” As to the conference: “It was my first, but certainly not my last. The networking with other Sherlockians was invaluable and the talks were completely enthralling. My only regret was on Saturday I forgot my camera.” One wonders what pictures he might have taken.

And there we come to the end of the letters. I’m sure Don wrote others to Sherlockians near and far. Are they part of the SMU collection or still in your care, Don? Eager researchers want to know!

Curators and archivists spend a fair amount of time reading other people's mail. In the process, we start to get a sense of the person behind the papers, the spirit that motivates their collecting. We may never fully grasp the fullness of



mind or generosity of heart as we arrange and process a collection, but every now and then we get a galactic glimpse. Don's dozen letters in the Shaw archive are part of that immense collecting landscape which shows a person loaded with curiosity, compassion, generosity, and a sometimes-unbridled spirit—a collecting mania in its worst form.

Happily, it has not overcome him. Don has been, and no doubt continues to be, a mentor to many, following in the footsteps of those who mentored him. I am delighted, as are many in this room, to call him friend and fellow collector. I enjoy his Irregular company and look forward to those times which find us together, such as today.



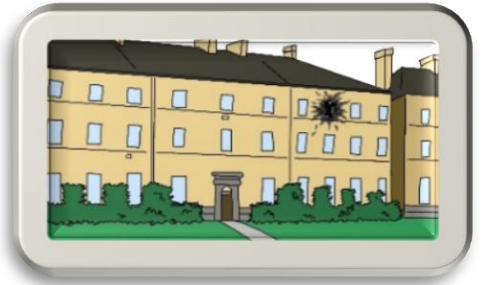
In the IHOSE interview Scott Monty asked Don “Do you regularly meet and greet and perhaps even stay with other Sherlockians when you travel?” Don answered: “I do. Michael Whelan called me the Johnny Appleseed of Sherlockiana one time.” John Bennett Shaw would have been proud as this was an appellation once applied to him.

I end with a slightly modified quotation, inspired by *A Study in Scarlet* and the collecting mania of Shaw, Hobbs, and others — “There’s a scarlet thread of *collecting* running through the *colorful* skein of life, and our duty is to unravel it, and *celebrate* it, and *share* every *bit* of it.

Well done and congratulations, Don!

Baker Street Elementary

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FAY, MASON & MASON

THE SCHOOL IS HOSTING A DANCE THIS WEEKEND WITH THE GREY'S HOSPITAL, THE GIRL'S SCHOOL DOWN THE ROAD.



THE FIRST ADVENTURES OF HOLMES AND WATSON

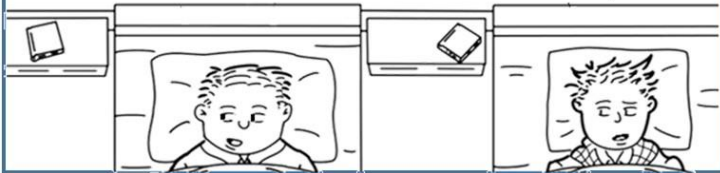
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I ALWAYS FORGET... DO WE ACTUALLY LIKE GIRLS YET?



DO WE LIKE GIRLS? ONLY TO THROW STUFF AT!

I AM NOT A WHOLE-SOULLED
ADMIRER OF WOMANKIND.



GIRLS ARE SO YUCKY!

GIRLS ARE NEVER TO BE ENTIRELY
TRUSTED—NOT THE BEST OF THEM!



I SEE YOUR POINTS... BUT IS IT JUST ME, OR
DOES THIS TOPIC SEEM TO COME UP A LOT MORE
OFTEN THAN WHEN WE WERE YOUNGER?

